CHINAFRICA: NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

Lucian-Vasile Szabo, Assist. Prof., PhD, West University of Timişoara

Abstract: Chinafrica is a word designating the soft power offensive in Africa. There are resemblances as well as notable differences between the two parts. Africa is a continent comprising significantly different states. In this context, we cannot speak about a unitary approach of the relations in Chinafrica. The present study shows the way in which, isolated from the democratic countries after the brutal repression from Tiananmen Square in 1989, China used the opportunity to develop a network of influence in the rest of the world. Making use of economical, technological and cultural soft power tools, China aims to increase its profit and influence. Yet, it needs such countries with a minimum stability, not necessarily meaning democratic. My hypothesis is that the current great global communication and media blow up is being felt in Chinafrica. China's influence in this field leads to the regularization of social relations in African countries, but it also represents a challenge for China's inner democratization.

Keywords: Chinafrica, soft power, Tiananmen, democracy, new media, expansion, technology.

A new meaning for soft power

Chinafrica is a word which was born in relation with Chindia. However, there are major differences between them. Chindia is rather defined by the competition between China and India on the external markets. Chinafrica primarily sets out the close relations and the cooperation strategies between China and many African countries. Some inner aspects of this cooperation network will hereby be analyzed. Following the development of media communication in Chinafrica and other soft power elements, we will also identify the challenges related to the evolution of the democratic values under this economical and cultural context. China has convincingly proved so far that an authoritarian regime can exist, based on a unique party, together with an opening towards a complex economy. This is not centrally managed (socialist), not entirely free (capitalist). It is a dangerous and curious mix, at the same time, whose evolution seems difficult to decode. The economical offensive in China (with annual increase rates exceeding 10%) can be noticed in a better lifestyle and the country's modernization.

The development of the material life is certainly accompanied by the improvement of the cultural and educational level. The effects of globalization are added to it, a field in which the state imposes certain limits, at least regarding the access to communication. However, there are enough data for many Chinese citizens to state the issue of a significant reform and also regarding the political system. Often, such actions for freedom and democracy are being brutally suppressed. For the time being, the Chinese autocratic regime indulges the service and ideas which would develop economy, the purpose being the highest profit possible. Yet, the weight is not only with the profit, but also with the influence. China is not willing to play the military card, although it is a global force in this field too. For the Chinese communist leaders, it is clear that the war, the direct encounter, the resort to hard power can be very expensive for the country and its own interests. They have more to benefit from economical,

technological and cultural expansion. China has conveniently construed the concept of soft power. It has even more dissolved its meaning of ideological confrontation, preserving the form of influence. The soft power strategies chosen by China for its endeavours to provide its influence in Africa are analyzed both as making part of a coherent program (even peremptory), and as a permanent adaptation to the on-site condition (Fijałkowski 2011).

The two concepts, hard and soft power, are relatively easy to understand, inspite of some dominant ambiguous contexts. An excellent description, where the semantic context and applicability are being detailed, is provided by Joseph S. Nye (2004). The examples of the soft power role given by the American professor are important, also coming from the Western media offensive in the countries with authoritarian regimes. Radio Free Europe would pervade behind the Iron Curtain, bringing up news and Western music, the remonstrant students from Tiananmen Square would build-up a replication of the Statue of Liberty, and Iran would be full of satellite antennas (Nye 2004: x). This is exactly what the former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu would disapprove in November 1989, on the occasion of the last congress of the Romanian Communist Party. Gilley (2010, 2011), directly referring to the increase of China's global influence, would establish two areas for the two types of power. Hard power includes the demographic, geographical, economical and military indicators. Soft power is made up of technological elements, organizations, culture, diplomacy and social development. Such approach needs shading. In my opinion, the word soft power can be understood as covering two distinct types of positioning:

1. At sight. Meaning diplomatic persuading and engouraging measures or threatening ones (not hard power type, but some like market closing, aid seizure);
2. Hidden. By means of manipulating leaders, friends or enemies and performing secret operations (possibly espionage, but we allude here to exchange speculations, incorporation of anonymous companies, discrete financing of persons or institutions).

The condition of a minimum stability

Nevertheless, the Chinese economical expansion also has an indeological side. The economy is often placed in the hard power area, but with Chinafrica it's not the tough competition that prevales, but the subtleties which help extending its influence, with apparent profit for the involved sides. There is an inclination for the settlement of Chinese investors in recently democratic countries or in which democracy is incipient. Certainly, the previous relations with the former communist countries have been preserved. They are now quickly developing, the Chinese capital being rapidly placed in such economies which have been fragile for several decades and with a weak vitality during the last years of crisis. Chinese investors feel fine in Romania or Hungary, their children being very skilfull students in the schools from such countries. An offensive is also visible in the Western countries, Italy, France, Germany or the Great Britain permanently absorbing Chinese products, capital and immigrants. But meanwhile in Europe and the Unites States of America the offensive is only felt at the level of economy, of the pursuit of profit and a better living, what happens in Africa, a continent where the democratic tradition is thinnish, and the revolutions and „revolutions" are so frequent? Here, the economic assault of China finds a fertile land: a

minimum stability is needed in relatively unpretentious societies so that the business of the Asian investors begin to flourish.

Too poor to refuse or oppose the monetary flows and the soft power subtle endeavours initiated by the Asian investors, African countries take the Chinese presence for a normal situation. There are two elements of risk in this operation performed with great efficiency:

The economic subordination, an evident and assumed vulnerability;

The ideologic influence, insidious and difficult to control.

Both segments of risk may induce the belief which is present in the country of origin: economy can develop and bring profit even in absence of democratic state elements. Expansion in the shade of economy and profit cannot be stopped anylonger: „Further in future, China and India loom as the giants of Asia, and there are already signs of the expansion of their soft-power resources" (Nye 2004: 88). In 2004, Nye anticipated this expansion, developed in multiple directions. As the Asian offensive is not only an economical one. It can be cultural, with its Nobel prize for literature in 2000. It is also present in sport, with multiple olympic and world champions, and with the organization of the Olympic Games in 2008. Regarding the Olympic Games, Alan Hunter (2009) would point out the efficiency of the propaganda machine, but also of the organizers' PR in fading away the Tibetan Protestants' voice of that time. Doubts appear when we make insights on the ideological expansion.

Kurlantzick (2007: 8) showed that China is extremely and widely active, from Asia to Australia and Argentina. The offensive from Thailand would be perfomed with mixed soft power weapons: business school openings and pop star concerts in these schools. China's interest for Africa (for any place where it can develop its business with a view to profit gaining) is obvious. The confrontation is not only with the Western Block, interested in preserving its interests. The disputes are also directed towards Russia, a state with a significant influence on the communist countries. In Africa as well, there is a strong offensive of India, another big Asian country not only interested in Africa, but also in the Arabian Gulf (Straubhaar 2010). Upon analysis of the „Going abroad" project, launched by China after the Olympics of 2008, and of the classification within the soft power strategies, Xin (2010) would notice that only certain elements were present. Three soft power resources are evident: culture; political values; and foreign policies. Supplementing Nye's theory, the author would find an important aspect for the soft power use: „The notion of soft power tends to ignore the ideological influence that a state's culture and political values exert on others" (Xin 2010).

The soft power strategies used by China in its commercial and cultural external offensive are also practiced inside the country, with some differences: the inner capitalism is less developed and the great industry remained under state's coordination. Also, at the cultural level, a certain opening can be noticed, but only in two major directions:

- A consumerist popular culture, only promoting at a simple and emotional level certain values, like heroism, loyalty, love;
- A culture of deepness (mainly of the elite), on non-controversial subjects.

Rough repression in the country of origin

However, the real debate of ideas, the literature and the art of the deep meanings and values (like freedom and faith), is missing, the ideological constraints being obvious, although, we can currently notice a slow evolution towards a more permissive system. The hard power strategies and actions are present in China. Externally abandoned, the hard power measures are being implemented when, inside the country, there are persons questionning the role of the unique party and its proposed ideology. There are moments when the repression occurs with a great wastage of forces, until the „enemies of the people" are eliminated or imprisoned, put to silence. Until now, the Chinese governmental forces have succeeded everytime to annihilate the remonstrants, either a Tibetan monk or a student in the Tiananmen Square. So far, in China, no group or organization has ever succedeed in acting as a real opposition. Any attempt was cruelly crushed.

A comparison to what happened at Timişoara, in the same year 1989, a few months later, gives us the possibility to understand the differences. The weak mediation of the protests which occurred in the Tiananmen Square from Beijing, on June 1989, has lead to the enhancement of the information on the riots from Timişoara on December 1989. The events from China have been inappropriately described compared to the requests of the journalistic communication, the main reason being the lack of reliable information, the absence of western journalists on the event scene, the refuse of authorities to provide exact information, the refuse to allow on site documentation and participators' interviewing, the spreading, by the representatives of the Communist regime, of fake information, starting from the negation of events to the provision of much underestimated data on the victims. In lack of accurate and certified data, doubtful sources have been provided, the only ones available, which, even vigilantly used, amplified the confused image on the Tiananmen Square protests and the reprisals initiated by the authorities.

Several months later, at Timişoara, a city in the West of Romania, 560 km away from the capital of Bucharest, but 60 km away from the border with ex-Jugoslavia, the interdition of the access to accurate information from the event scene has greatly repeated the communicational distorsion previously recorded in China. The situation was similar: the same concern of the regime to cut the external relations (beyond the borders), the interdiction inside the country and city for the foreign informants, the lack of news on the events at the national radio and tv stations, and further, the communication of conviction materials regarding those involved in the riots, desperate and systematic attempts to hide the truth about the repression. The two communist regimes, the Chinese and the Romanian, had been similarly concerned to erase the traces of massacres and to spread reassuring information, claiming that such events had been unimportant, subsequently being attributed to some persons which violated the law, thus understanding that they had to be punished, submitted to the public opprobrium, by all the honest citizens. It was a mystification, conceived by the two communist regimes, but which never fully reached their purpose.

There have always been differences between what was promoted by the ideologist officials and the agitators of the communist (totalitarian) party and what the citizens submitted to such assault really believed. Although they did not express their real beliefs and insinuated that they would accept the official propaganda and the imposed conduct, many

Romanian or Chinese people knew that the truth was much more gradated. They knew and they know now that the official lie was huge. The possibility for a free expression was extremely limited and developed inclusively by means of the blockage of any mean of communication beyond the national borders of the two countries. When the first piece of news about the riot from Timişoara, in the morning of December 17, 1989, reached the Occident, journalists from the free world feared that the phenomenon of stopping the event consitutive elements would repeat. Nothing is more serious for the consciousness of a professional journalist than seing that something really important is happening and he is unable to provide real details, that despite acerbic urging, he does not receive details and confirmations. Opposite to the painful subject of the Tiananmen Square reprisals, where important aspects of those events are still uncleared, for the amplifications from Timişoara we have a better positioning. The removal of the dictatorial regime facilitated several investigations, and the communication field researchers have many elements available to clear the mechanism through which the serious misinformation was possible. The situation also changed since then in China as well. New and social media, and the acces to mobile media, make the information more easily to obtain. As Zhang (2010) noticed, the interest for China has increased three times during two decades. Moreover, the soft power offensive released in the world, in Africa in particular, puts the state under a permanent observation of media.

In terms of journalistic approaches, the Romanian revolution was a surprise for the rest of the world, at the same time providing a testing ground for the new technologies and journalistic innovating methods. Surprisingly, the blow would come, to a certain extent, from the integrated technological capacities, meant to provide a better and a quicker spreading of information. The perverted effects, insufficiently analyzed and tested before, would strike to the full: a better communication would yet mean a bigger possibility of manipulation. Further studies would identify with exactitude the consequences of such over-communication, where the global television would become the main character, tragedian and comedian at the same time: ”The problem with the Tiananmen Square and Romanian revolution television stories is very signifiant in an age of instantaneous communication: first images are not propely evaluated before being transmitted; and second, after the distorsion is created, there is never sensational correction of the reality” (Aubin 1998: 163).

In the mentioned paper, the author insisted on the resemblances between China and Romania regarding the problematic way of image transmission through television, when the lack of editing or the superficial editing turned the impact into an extraordinary one. The conclusion is, however, half legitimate. No doubt, certain aspects could not have been adjusted, but the images generated a wave of sympathy for the victims. This type of live transmissions during long periods of time would become common working methods in television, in press in general, especially during the revolutions from the Arabian countries, in 2010-2012 (Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos 2012). Certainly, we must also consider the discussions arisen by the movement into the cyberspace, possible after 1994, the year of the starting point for the digital media expansion (via internet).

A half-learned lesson

The drastic intervention of the public order forces from June 1989 against the Chinese students, rebelling in the Tiananmen Square, caused many victims, the number of the killed, injured or arrested only being approximated, since it cannot be known in detail. After the huge tragedy during the Romanian revolution and the sanguinary character of the changes (including the controversy on the number of dead and injured) another type of analysis would appear, capable of imposing a change pattern in other countries as well. The sanguinary revolution from Romania would resume after more than two decades in Tunisia, Libia and Egypt. A strange thing is what's happening now, in 2012, in Siria, where the governmental crimes against the demonstrants and the democratic opposition are items of the agenda, the mass media and the official reports also speaking about thousands and thousands of victims (dead and injured). This aspect proves that the Romanian lesson was hardly learned. It is not *the Timişoara syndrome* that hinders the really democratic states from interferring to stop the bloodshed, but interests in terms of preserving a certain geo-strategical balance, more important than the thousands of lost lives. However, as Carbone (2011) sets out, some structures from the countries with a consolidated democracy adopted conviction sentences for China for having violated human rights, although there was a need for a cooperation. Might it be an attempt of the European Union to use a soft power tool in order to hold back China's advance in Africa? In the same document, the Asian state was accused of African populations' impoverishment, by means of bringing up Chinese workers. The reaction was so virulent and long time argued that it even generated disputes in the European Union.

Although the 1989 Romanian repression would be compared to the Chinese one, the facts prove that the Chinese leaders became aware that the situation changed and that the brutal repression could draw even bigger riots. For this reason, the liberalization in small steps would be applied, in order to decrease the pressure on the society. The danger of the insurrection, devastating for the Chinese communists could be foreseen ever since January 1990. Richard Baum, Professor of Political Science at UCLA, in the United States, would speak about this possibility: "Timişoara and Tiananmen. The parallels were striking-enough to make China's aging leaders visibly nervous: An intransigent communist regime, facing a rising tide of democratic protest fueled by deepening economic contradictions, employs deadly force to halt the spread of 'bourgeois liberalization,' in the process slaughtering scores of unarmed civilians. For the authors of last June's Beijing massacre it was, in Yogi Berra's immortal words, 'deja vu all over again'-until the people of Romania dramatically altered the script by overthrowing their communist government and executing the dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu. At that point, Chinese nervousness turned to outright alarm" (Baum 1990).

The author would even note the Chinese leaders' strategy of welcoming the power taking over by the President Ion Iliescu in Romania, after the removal and execution of the former communist leader Nicolae Ceauşescu. References to China ought to be made, because, as Peter Siani-Davies points out, there was this danger, at Timişoara, of fraternization between the insurgents and the opponents of the forces appointed to perform the repression. Military forces were challenged in Beijing from outside the capital „to suppress the Tiananmen Square demonstration" (Siani-Davies 2005: 93). The same would happen in

Timişoara, where military gangs would arrive, on December 17, 1989, from the neighbourhood.

One year after the events from the Tiananmen Square, Simon (1990) would make some considerations on the future of business in the Popular Republic of China (PRC). He would notice that the brutal repression from June 1989 had a special impact on the foreign investments, which became more reserved. This trend did not last, yet. The further progress proved that, despite the reprisals (some of them even more violent, but occurring far away from the capital or the eyes of the Occidentals), the business kept on blooming. Also important was the fact that the Asian country was a vast market place. At the same time, the leaders from Beijing would show that they had learned something out of that experience, however not much. They made small steps towards a limited economical liberalization and started to aggressively develop their own production facilities, even in a quasiprivate system. During that period, the following would be noticed: „Prior to Tiananmen, it appeared that one new source of technological dynamism in the PRC economy would come from the growing number of small 'minban' (quasiprivate) companies" (Simon 1990). Mawdsley (2007) would show the way in which the limitation of the economical and especially political relations between China and the highly democratic countries after the sanguinary repression from the Tiananmen Square favoured the development of the relations with the African states. This was a landmark. The relations developed out of a constraint, as we have already noticed, but also out of an extraordinary intuition of the PRC leaders. Gill and Huang (2006) would prove how China rapidly took over the control in Ethiopia, after 1990, although it had few relations with this African state before. It would make use of the Occidental states' withdrawal after the beginning of hostilities with Eritrea.

In time, a real offensive developed, which gambled and is still gambling on the shortfall of democracy in many African areas. In this context, a new optics would impose. Zhao (2010) would bring arguments to show the way in which China became a model for the African or the Latin American states. With Nye's words, the author would conclude: "In parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the so-called 'Beijing Consensus' on authoritarian government plus a market economy has become more popular than the previously dominant 'Washington Consensus' of market economics with democratic government" (Zhao 2010).

There are several nuances here as well, the Chinese model in internal and foreign affairs, being discussed by other authors as well (Halper 2010; Naughton 2010; Chen and Goodman 2012). The offensive would also occur on the media market. Duncan (2011) would notice, regarding South Africa, but the situation can also be present in other African states, that in terms of press regulation, an own course would be chosen, perhaps a middle one. The Washington pattern would be considered too liberal, too open. The Beijing pattern is considered as too authoritarian, too closed. However, I estimate that the technological progress and the digital media expansion would make any type of control become frail. Such societies might not evolve towards a stable democracy, but it becomes evident that the inhabitants of Africa could no longer be prevented from using any source of information they might want.

Challenges for democracy

We have no idea where the world is going to and how international relations would work in the future. Regarding China's expansion, it is obvious that it will continue. It will take shape at a demographical, economical (financial and manufacturing), cultural level, but also in the fields of the technological development or scientific research. Researchers believe that there are reasons to see China's development and expansion as a threat. There are also many opinions which agree to the idea of the non-disruptive character of this evolution. A relinquishment is needed, of certain concepts which identify the Asian state as a threat in virtue of a convenient tradition. Nuanced positions are being requested, because „acting on the assumption that China could disrupt order, rather than on evidence that it is not, is dangerous" (Gilley 2011). Obviously, the world is evolving, and changes are on every day's agenda, either unexpected or happening in rather long time. The question is, however, whether such evolutions will also occur in the sense of the establishment of more democratic regimes, with freedom for the citizens. China is not willing to give up its political system, as it considers it the only efficient in this stage. In South Asia, Africa, and soon in South America, the Chinese offensive finds numerous opportunities for establishment. But what if, facing great threats and bearing frustrations generated by uncertainty, the former Occidental democracies believe that they can save themselves by adopting even more drastic control measures? The Chinese authoritarianism can be attractive in virtue of its economical efficiency.

Africa represents an opportunity for China. However, challenges are big, as the events on the African continent represent a dare even for the local countries. A few states from this region are stable and even fewer have a consolidated democracy. The area experiences major changes, the proof being the insurrections from the North Arabian countries, but also the difficult problems from the equatorial region. In order to expand, China needs stability and governments which should control the internal situation, but preserving, to a certain extent, the market economy free. The Chinese investors are not easy in unstable areas, marked by conflicts. It is certainly a common feature, since solely such investors with a very high sense of risk do venture in such places. And they are very few. Nor are the stable, consolidated democracies yet necessarily searched. Important agreements can certainly be available, like the one with Australia (Camilleri, Aran and Michális 2013). Australia's need for cooperation made it get over its reserves regarding the violation of human rights and the sanguinary repression from the Tiananmen Square and sign a treaty. Commercial exchanges are important, and both parties can benefit from them. The Chinese investors do not like the authoritarian states either, in control of everything. Business cannot develop in such places. In some countries, such activities are even banned (Cuba, North Korea) or the imposed conditions are unbearable.

The Chinese offensive in the world evolves in three major directions. The first is the one concerning the massive exportation of goods on all the markets, the Occidental or African ones. The second aims the financial placements. Very many states, even those highly industrialized, took loans from the Chinese state or accepted company investments. Thirdly, China prooves to be extremely insistent among its citizens. They come around and do business in all the corners of the world. Most of the times, the invested amounts are

diminished to the minimum set out by the host-country legislation. Trade is the most favourite field, followed by the local small industry. The products brought into the market are generally low-priced, which causes real problems to the competition. Either brought from China, or manufactured in the marketplace country, such products supply profitable business. Africa, by now passing through a period in which the number of dangerous areas has decreased, and those still dangerous are less intense, promises to be, if not already, the ideal place for Chinese investments under all three above mentioned forms. However, we cannot treat this continent in a unitary way. There are major differences. Several benchmarks can be set out: the Arabian and the non-Arabian; states with a relatively democratic stability and those passing through chaos; poor countries and resourceful countries; states with a higher living standard and others with extremely poor people. Each of them has its specific features, a difference also occuring, like Frère (2012a) noticed, in terms of their language. With its technical media offenssive, China makes a good turn to the English language.

Indirect ways to democracy

Africa presently experiences three great reasons of instability:

a) The remonstrative movements, some of them revolutionary, especially in the Northern Arabian states;
b) The danger of the islamic offensive, also present in this Northern region;
c) Terroristic actions or the use of safety installations and places or training camps.

The Occidental states (USA and the European Union) are involved under various forms in these areas, supporting stable, democratic governments. The suspicions that such governments should be favourable for them cannot be excluded. Russia often comes into the discussion, sometimes as an advocate of some communist authoritarian leaders or regimes. China avoids openly taking a partisan attitude. It carefully follows its economical interests, developing soft power strategies, taking advantage of the disputes between the other world forces. However, it does not export democracy, because it doesn't have one and it never had. China tries to exploit such confusing situations and it sometimes succeeds. Often, the political regime type doesn't even matter, as long as the economical and cultural offensive can be performed.

The extension on the African continent also occurs through technology. China is the manufacturer of almost everything that is needed, from household electric appliances to the most sophisticated tools of global communication. According to Chinese sources, technology, especially meaning the new, digital or mobile media, is largely present in Africa. In a report, Frère would notice, for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), one of the poorest countries on the continent: "New cheap devices with greater technical capacities, mainly from China, are spreading and allow new forms of mobile consumption. Some 34 percent of the respondents say they are internet users, 13 percent say they listen to the radio via the internet, and 11 percent watch television on the internet" (2012a).

. Sometimes, the low quality of such products is being claimed, but considering the sale prices, such claims are being removed. The products are accessible for many Africans, but not the same can be said about the goods manufactured in the Western countries. Americans and Europeans buy more and more products made in China, so why wouldn't

Africans do likewise?! In addition to the low prices for goods and services, there are also another three features favouring the Chinese expansion in Africa:

        d)   A visible reserve in many African areas regarding the role of the Occident, seen as imperialistic and politically and economically arrogant;

        1.   The support of composite political systems, with some liberties and many restrictions, a mixture of democracy and authoritarianism;

        2.   A local pride, focused on traditions, but sometimes excessive in the eyes of an Occidental, which could be construed as a refuse to accept lessons.

Not eager to „export" democracy and give advice on the observance of the human rights, China is rapidly and economically extending in Africa anywhere there is the weakest form of stability. Suzuki (2009) would also notice that China's contribution with staff in the peace preservation forces organized under the aegis of the United Nations is part of the soft power manipulation capacity. It leaves the apparence of a cooperation, but it actually leads the way for the economical offensive. This trend is also similar in case of the humanitarian and peace preservation missions in Africa.

In terms of communication, the Chinese offensive is present in all the components. China brings new technology in Africa. Not the latest one, as it might not even be needed. It provides everything from mobile phones and personal computers to tablet PCs and wide screen TVs. Reception elements are also included, antennas and other devices, the data transmission being facilitated by satellites which can be accessed for a lower market price. There is also an involvement in wide projects. Trying to deal with the soft power Chinese challenge in Africa, the Western countries have contributed to the mounting of an optical fiber cable from South Africa to Great Britain. However, on the eastern side of the continent, another cable of this type is already mounted by China International Telecommunication Construction Corporation (CITCC), in order to provide access from this direction (Frère 2012b). But there is also a direct relation between communication, technology and democracy. The first two contribute to the establishment of open regimes, and such progress can be seen in Africa as well. Barber (2000/2001) already ascertained by then that Africa, initially excluded from the access to internet, makes big steps to catch up.

The offensive is also in terms of content, from music to movies and computer games, fields of entertainment in which China became a global power. However, there is a trap here. It is obvious that, in Africa, the Chinese representatives cannot do what they usually do at home, which means acts of brutal repression. Moreover, their policy cannot be supported abroad through hard power measures. Will we get to see the collapse of the soft power economical policy as the debates on freedom, citizen rights and democratic governance intensify in Africa? This might happen, favoured by the more and more easy access to the global means of communication, equipment provided by China itself at friendly prices. The great Asian state would not be able anymore to limit the access to the Internet like it would do at home. At the same time, the Western mass culture, especially the American one, is attractive enough in the entire world so as not to find its place in the slightly democratic African states. This is a first level, which means: „least universal, adult suffrage; recurring, free, competitive and fair elections; more than one political party; and more than one source of information" (Morlino 2004).

Another trap for the Chinese political system is the fact that this entire international and global experience in the next stage of communication reflects upon the domestic political conditions. This exact gradual economical opening encourages competition and critical analysis. For how long could the communist governance manage to open the way for capitalist economic relations without opening the political system? Communication could no longer be blocked or limited, the technical systems becoming more and more advanced. Millions of Chinese travel around the world, many of them doing business. A lot of them come back, and the experience abroad makes them to, openly or quietly, support the local changes. Some other millions of Chinese people would approach such democratic evolutions from the states they happen to be in, communicating more and more freely with those from the country. This area is difficult to control, possibly meaning, like He (2013) believes, a way of collaborating with China for the establishment of democracy! This possiblity was also stated by Minyue (2007). Under such conditions, economically dominating Africa, China cannot avoid influences. It would provide the means for a minimum democratization, in order to create its own necessary space for investments, for profit gains. The new media technologies, exported and generalized through soft power measures, would contribute to Chinafrica's development. In this context, we can expect a larger debate on democracy and human rights, as well as a gradual progress of such elements. China would grow democratic under the influence of new and social media, bearing the consequences of the challenges launched in the entire world and that it is experiencing in Africa.

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